others have suggested setting up of a National Judicial Commission for appointment/removal and transfer of Supreme Court and High Court judges; and

(b) if so, what is Government's re-action thereto?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI M. THAMBI DURAI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) One of the items of the National Agenda for Governmance is to set up a National Judicial Commission to make recommendations for Judicial appointments in the Supreme Court and the High Courts.

Policy on Road Transport

*5. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact mat the number of vehicles in the country has grown from 0.3 million in 1951 to 33.5 million in 1996 thus registering a growth rate of over 10 per cent per annum;

(b) if so, what broad policies relating to road transport and free and safe movement of vehicular traffic are being formulated by Government during the Ninth Han period; and

(c) the details of budgetary provisions made during 1999-2000?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI M. THAMBI DURAI): (a) The total number of vehicles have increased from 3.06 lakhs in 1951 to 337.83 lakhs in 1996 registering a growth rate of about 11% p.a.

(b) Broad policies for the Road Transport during Ninth Five Year Plan are:

1. Strengthening and improving the crucial sections of the highway network through phased removal of deficiencies and multi-laning of high density corridors
2. Improving the road communications in remote areas such as the North Eastern States
3. Taking up special National Highway development project for the total length of 16000 km. approximately which includes the major highways linking Delhi; Calcutta, Chennai and Mumbai constituting the golden quadrangle and North-South and East-West corridors alongwith certain spurs.
4. To give further push to private sector participation by taking up viable sections of four major corridors under BOT Scheme for four laning.
5. To give utmost attention for proper upkeep and maintenance of the road networks already created
6. To tackle the problem of road safety by adopting measures for education of road users and strengthening of the enforcement.
7. In the area of road construction proper engineering measures like provision of median, railing, lane marking, replacement of level crossings by Rail-over-Bridges and provision of reflectorised road signs, rest areas etc. would be taken up to improve road safety.
8. In order to minimise adverse impact of enviroment caused by road construction, new road construction and maintenance practices will be encouraged. Deforestation during road construction would be kept to the minimum and any cutting of trees will be replaced by plantation of trees.
9. Research and Development activities will be taken up in all areas of road development with the objective to develop road planning and construction technology which results in reduction in construction cost, vehicle operation cost, accident rates etc.
10. In order to build quality roads, adoption of new technology, will be encouraged.
11. While efforts would be made to strengthen the enforcement machinery to check overloading, steps will be taken to modernise the truck fleet by introducing multi-axle vehicles.
12. Rationalisation of the tax structure to achieve interstate parity in taxation and

road transport sector

13. Restructuring urban transport system on the lines of Mass Rapid Transport System.

14. Development of a sound information based management information system.

15. Private Sector participation in all the realms of transport industry because of inadequacy of public resources.

16. Introduction of Multi-modal system for freight traffic.

17. Attention to Human Resource Development in the labour intensive transport sector.

18. To give more attention on R & D towards vehicle technology and

19. Adoption of all possible measures in reducing vehicular pollution.

(c) The budget for 1999-2000 is yet to be approved by the Parliament.

Leasing agreement between AI and Antiguan Company M/s Caribjet

*6. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Air India had any leasing agreement with Antiguan Company M/s Caribjet;

(b) if so, the details of the agreement; and

(c) whether the agreement had fallen through and AIR India had to pay heavy penalties; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANATH KUMAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Air India had taken two A310-300 aircraft on wetlease from Antiguan Company M/s Caribjet intially for a period of six months with effect from December, 1994. The lease was further extended upto December, 1995. Again in November, 1995 Air India concluded a fresh agreement with M/s Caribjet Inc. for wet-lease of two L1011 -500 aircraft and one A310-300 aircraft for a period of two years effective from 1.1.96

(c) Air India terminated the wetlease agreement with Caribjet with effect from September 4, 1996 on grounds of technical lapses and non-fulfilment of various norms of Directorate General of Civil Aviation. Caribjet, on their part, in pursuance of the provisions of the agreement has taken the matter to arbitral Tribunal, London. The Arbitral Tribunal after hearing the evidence of both the parties, oral and written submissions, declared their award on 19.1.99 on the issue of liability in which the Tribunal opined that the wetlease agreement had been wrongfully terminated by Air India. The issue of Guantum of compensation is yet to be heard by the Tribunal for which proceedings are scheduled for May 10, 1999. The exact quantum by way of compensation would be known once the award is declared by the Tribunal in May 1999 or thereafter. Air India management has decided to go in appeal to the London High Court against the award of the Tribunal on the issue of liability through their Indian Lawyers and an English firm of Solicitors.

Projects Sanctioned under IRDP

*7. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:
SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications forwarded to the public sector banks for the projects under I.R.D.P. scheme;

(b) the number of schemes sanctioned and the number of disposals made, State-wise and bank-wise, during the last three years;

(c) whether it is a fact that there is wide gap between the number of applications made, projects sanctioned and actual disbursals; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor and the steps contemplated to rectify the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE BANKING, REVENUE AND INSURANCE (SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN): (a) and (b) Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment, who administer the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) scheme, have informed that year-wise credit targets are fixed keeping in view the subsidy available. The State-wise details of total number of families benefited, credit targets and